

REMARKS

This Amendment is in response to the Office Action mailed November 19, 2003, which sets a three-month period for response. Claims 1-5, 12, 13 and 21-28 were pending in the application. In the Office Action, claims 5, 24 and 26-28 were allowed, and claims 1-4, 12, 13, 21-23 and 25 were rejected. In this Amendment, claims 1-4, 12, 13, 21-23 and 25 have been canceled, and new claims 29 and 30 have been added.

Applicants submit that the application is now in condition for allowance and request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections in light of the following remarks.

103 Rejections

Claims 1-3 and 21-23 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Wallace et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,020,243) in view of Gardner et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,130,164).

Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Wallace in view of Gardner as applied to claim 3, and further in view of Ma et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,407,435).

Claims 12, 13 and 25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Wallace in view of Rodder (U.S. Patent No. 6,261,887) and further in view of Gardner.

Claims 1-4, 12, 13, 21-23 and 25 have been canceled, thereby rendering their rejections moot.

Allowable Subject Matter / New Claims

Claims 5, 24 and 26-28 were allowed.

New claims 29 and 30 depend on claim 5. Since claim 5 is patentable over the cited references, claims 29 and 30 are patentable over the cited references based at least on their dependency on claim 5.

Applicants submit that all of the claims now pending in the application are in condition for allowance, which action is earnestly solicited.

It is submitted that these claims, as originally presented, are patentably distinct over the prior art cited by the Examiner, and that these claims were in full compliance with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. §112. Changes to these claims, as presented herein, are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §§101, 102, 103 or 112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which Applicants are entitled.

Statements appearing above with respect to the disclosures in the cited references represent the present opinions of the Applicants' undersigned attorney and, in the event that the Examiner disagrees with any such opinions, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner specifically indicate those portions of the respective reference providing the basis for a contrary view.

If any issues remain, or if the Examiner has any further suggestions, he/she is invited to call the undersigned at the telephone number provided below.

The Examiner is hereby authorized to charge any insufficient fees or credit any overpayment associated with the above-identified application to Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

The Examiner's consideration of this matter is gratefully acknowledged.

Respectfully submitted,

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